

# Opening Statement of Energy Subcommittee Ranking Member Randy Weber at Energy Subcommittee Markup of H.R. 4091 & H.R. 4230

Sep 11, 2019

Opening Statement

Good morning. Thank you, Chairman Lamb, for the opportunity to speak on H.R. 4091, the ARPA-E Reauthorization Act of 2019, and H.R. 4230, the Clean Industrial Technology Act of 2019.

During my tenure on the Science Committee, we've had an incredible track record for passing bipartisan legislation. Just last Congress, 32 of the 34 bills from this Committee, an outstanding 94%, received bipartisan support. In fact, the Energy Subcommittee only worked in bipartisan fashion, with all nine energy related bills passing the House with bipartisan support from Science Committee members.

Now, we certainly had different opinions on a whole range of policy issues. But at the end of the day, when it came to legislating, we focused on the areas where we had common ground. Unfortunately, that is not the case this Congress – and today we are holding yet another partisan markup.

The two bills we will consider today may be characterized as bipartisan because of a single cosponsor, but that support does not come from Members of this Committee. Because once again, both bills propose reckless budget increases without including any offsets in spending – something I simply cannot support.

The first, H.R. 4091, the ARPA-E Reauthorization Act of 2019, would increase ARPA-E's authorization by 173%, to \$1 billion in fiscal year (FY) 2024.

This funding level is both unrealistic and unproductive. Such a high rate of increase would be challenging for any program to effectively manage – but ARPA-E is particularly unsuited for the task, and its small staff will make this even more difficult.

Now I want to acknowledge that this bill does make important policy reforms to DOE's ARPA-E program, building off those in Ranking Member Lucas's bipartisan ARPA-E legislation that passed the House last Congress. While I support these reforms, we don't need to drastically increase ARPA-E's funding to implement them.

It is unfortunate that we are unable to meet in the middle and reach a compromise on funding for this program.

And I'll be the first to admit – I and many of my conservative colleagues on this Committee have been skeptical of ARPA-E, and I have voted many times to cut spending for this program.

But I believe that Ranking Member Lucas's most recent ARPA-E bill, which has nearly identical policy reforms paired with authorization levels that were supported by Chairwoman Johnson last Congress, is a responsible compromise approach. I encourage the Chairman and this Committee to consider that legislation.

The second bill we will consider today, H.R. 4230, the Clean Industrial Technology Act of 2019, seeks to develop technologies to reduce emissions in industrial sectors.

While I agree there is a need for collaboration in developing new technologies to reduce emissions, I'm concerned that we're rushing to move a major authorization without doing our homework.

For example, I support the establishment of the federal advisory committee in section four of this bill.

But before we authorize a new program, shouldn't we first make sure this advisory committee has developed an effective research roadmap and goals for that program? Don't we want the experts from industry, academia, and the agencies to be able to weigh in before blindly committing taxpayer dollars?

This legislation also includes language that delegates authority for setting spending levels to the appropriators.

If we don't know how much a program should cost, we have no business authorizing that program. Let's take the time to hear from stakeholders on what is needed, and do our job.

We all support basic research. We all want to see the United States remain a leader in energy technology. And we can and should work together to send bipartisan legislation to the House floor.

In closing, I want to emphasize that I support the intent behind both of these bills. But unfortunately, I can't support a bill where we haven't done our due diligence, or where we are making promises we can't keep.

Let's stop wasting time, and get back to work on the areas where we can all agree.